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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002860

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: TURKEY REQUESTS US HELICOPTER SUPPORT  
FOR ROTATION OF ITS IRAQ LNOs

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) The Turkish military has requested U.S. support to transport Turkish Special Forces liaison officers (LNOs) co-located with US/Coalition forces in Northern Iraq to the Habur Gate border crossing. MND-N has previously provided helicopter support for this rotation on an informal basis but now wishes to formalize the tasking. The Turkish Special Forces Brigade headquartered at Silopi, Turkey rotates every 4 months. Associated with brigade headquarters change-out is the rotation of 20 to 21 Turkish Special Forces LNOs working at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior in Kirkuk, TF Iron in Marez, and Camp Sykes in Tal Afar. Departing LNOs are transported from these locations to Habur Gate on the Iraqi side of the border, and then the new LNOs are flown back to US/Coalition facilities.

¶2. (C) The Turkish Special Forces brigade at Silopi has agreed to use Turkish aviation assets to transport their LNOs from Mosul and Marez to the Habur Gate border crossing. However, rotating seven Turkish LNOs based in Kirkuk is more problematic for Turkey and Iraq given the political sensitivities surrounding Kirkuk. In addition, Turkish helicopters are not equipped with sufficient countermeasures to operate safely in the more hostile environment that exists in the Kirkuk area.

¶3. (C) This mission contributes to improved relations and transparency between US/Coalition forces and Turkish military forces operating in Northern Iraq. The helicopter mission in support of the Turkish Special Forces LNOs also supports enhanced U.S. engagement with senior Turkish military leaders during a period of stress in the relationship caused by PKK terrorism and increases dialogue that helps to align Turkish and U.S. political objectives. By providing secure transport for allied military personnel in a combat zone, we are demonstrating to Turkey our commitment to partnership in Iraq.

¶4. (C) We believe it is in the US interest to support LNO rotation to and from Kirkuk, subject to MND-N aircraft availability and other operational requirements. Once support is approved, we recommend the US LNO serving at the Turkish Special Forces Brigade Headquarters in Silopi, Turkey be authorized to coordinate scheduling directly with MND-N.

¶5. (C) The Turkish SF Brigade has requested support for personnel rotation as follows:

5 Dec 07: transport 4 Turkish LNOs from Kirkuk (FOB Warrior) to Marez.

7 Dec 07: transport 7 Turkish LNOs from Marez to Kirkuk (FOB Warrior).

9 Dec 07: transport 3 Turkish LNOs from Kirkuk (FOB Warrior)  
to MArez.

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